

WARPED CURVES

This is one of those mirrors that distorts you for amusement purposes. I'm shorter and bulgier. My belt is up around my neck. No legs to speak of, yet my shoes are huge and floppy, like a clown's. When I smile at my freaky reflection, my teeth look two feet long. Others of all sizes and shapes join me to stare at their images in the glass. There's a lot of giggling at first, but it grows more subdued as we realize the good-looking people still look better than those who were less than attractive to begin with.

GRINDSTONE COWBOY

Hating your job eventually becomes a vital part of doing it. You reach a point where you literally can't do it unless you hate it. Say for instance you're a benefits administrator. You can't be really effective unless you hate the idea of people "plotting" to get the benefits they deserve. Or suppose you're in insurance. There's no way you're going to be a good insurance agent unless you see a scam in every claim form. Hating the idea of being in insurance helps you be a better, more ruthless insurance person. Even if you work in the zoo, cleaning cages, you're going to be better at it if you hate animals, and your hate frightens them into silence at feeding time, preventing them from biting your head off and using it as a plaything. This country wouldn't function half as well if people liked their jobs. Hatred of being a fisherman makes you take it out on the fish with sophisticated sonar equipment no fair man would ever use. Back on land, your wife runs a day-care center. She hates kids. It's a Nazi prison camp with grape juice. Enrollment continues to grow.